SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

7th Year – November 19, 1973

No 223

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

A serious warning

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam issued on November 9 a statement sternly denouncing the very serious war acts of the Saigon administration.

The statement reads in full as follows :

"SINCE the signing of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the United States and the Saigon administration have violated in a systematic manner many main provisions of the Agreement, thus rendering the situation in South Viet Nam more tense.

The United States still refuses to end its military involvement and interference in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam, while continuing to intensify its military aid and ceaselessly and illegally introducing arms, ammunition and war means into South Viet Nam. It has left behind in South Viet Nam more than 24,000 military personnel disguised as civilian personnel to direct the war machine of the Saigon administration.

Instigated and supported by the United States, the Saigon administration has frenziedly stepped up its land-nibbling operations against many areas controlled by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam while intensifying police and "pacification" operations and "purges" in a campaign of brutal repression and persecution against the people in the areas under its control. It continues to detain over 200,000 political prisoners in its prisons. At the Joint Military Commission and the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties, the Saigon administration has always adopted an insolent and provocative attitude, clinging to its obstinate stand and causing a stagnation of the work of these bodies.

Regardless of the South Vietnamese people's aspirations for peace, democracy and national concord and heedless of the warning of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the Saigon administration keeps recklessly pursuing the path of extremely dangerous military adventures.

More serious still, on November 7, 1973, the Saigon administration mobilized many fighter-bombers to wantonly bomb and strafe Loc Ninh township and Ba Dop area deep in the zone under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam. These air-raids killed and wounded more than one hundred civilians, mostly women and children, destroyed hundreds of houses, many schools, hospitals, pagodas and churches, thus multiplying the Saigon administration's heinous crimes against the South Vietnamese people.

These barbarous acts of war have further proved that the warlike and fascist Nguyen Van Thieu clique, backed by the United States, is feverishly sabotaging the Paris Agreement and peace. They have further laid bare the odious nature of the US and the Saigon administration in their attempt to do away with the revolutionary achievements of the South Vietnamese people, and negate the revolutionary administration, the liberation armed forces and the zone of control of the Provisional Revolutionary Governement of the Republic of South Viet Nam. By piling up its crimes and escalating its violation of the Agreement, the Saigon administration is insolently challenging the Vietnamese people and the peace- and justice-loving people in the whole world.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam vehemently denounces and sternly condemns these serious acts of violation by the Saigon administration and the United States. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam resolutely demands that the United States and the Saigon administration put an immediate end to all these acts, scrupulously respect and strictly implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam severely warns that the criminal war acts of the United States and the Saigon administration will be duly punished by the South Viet Nam Liberation Armed Forces. If they stubbornly persist in their acts of violation, they will sustain yet heavier setbacks.

Dear compatriots,

Dear cadres and combatants of the South Viet Nam People Liberation Armed Forces,

For the sake of the vital interests of our people, we are desirous of maintaining the ceasefire, preserving peace, and achieving national reconciliation and concord with a view to promptly materializing the genuine right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people and proceeding to the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland. We have clearly manifested our serious stand and shown our good will in implementing the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué. However, bellicose and stubborn by nature and instigated and abetted by the United States, the Saigon administration has gone ever farther on the path of military adventures. Our armed unity, forces and people must strengthen unity, sharpen vigilance, and stand ready to smash all the criminal war acts of the Saigon administration, in defence of the gains of the revolution, the lives and property of the people, the liberated zone, and the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

Soldiers and officers, and functionaries of the Saigon army and administration,

Prompted by its selfish interests, the bellicose and fascist Nguyen Van Thieu clique is forcing you to oppose our people's aspiration for peace and national reconciliation and concord. Now, all of you should refuse to take part in 'sweeps' and land-grabbing operations and refuse to encroach on the lives and property of the people, demand an end to all the conflicts and the restoration of peace to help build a happy life for your families and neighbours.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam calls on the governments and peoples of all the socialist countries, the Non-Aligned countries, the other peace- and justice-loving countries, the international, democratic organizations, and the world peoples, including the progressive people in the United States to give yet stronger support to the just cause of the South Vietnamese people, and resolutely demand that the government of the United States and the Saigon administration strictly implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, thus guaranteeing a durable peace in Viet Nam and contributing to the cause of peace in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

The just cause of the South Vietnamese people will triumph.

Mothers send off their sons to the PLAF for the defence of South Viet Nam free zone still bombed and shelled by the US-Thieu

SOW THE WIND... ... reap the whirlwind

ACCORDING to still incomplete data, between January 28 and the end of October, cease-fire violations by Saigon amounted to over 271,000 cases, including 32,800 encroaching operations, 12,400 bombings and armed air reconnaissance missions, 34,300 artillery strikes (1.7 million shells) and 191,400 pacification raids.

Most seriously, on November 7, 50 fighter jets of various kinds bombed and strafed all day long the town of Loc Ninh, and villages 1, 10 and 11 of the commune of Loc Thien. The town's Ninh Phu, Ninh Hoa and Ninh Phuoc districts, market place and hospital were hit. 150 bombs were dumped, killing over 40 people and wounding 70 others including women, children, and many patients in the hospital: 200 houses were destroyed.

Also on November 7, by 9.15 a.m., in 44 sorties Saigon aircraft struck indiscriminately in and around the town of Bu Dop. Temples and schools were hit, resulting in 5 dead and 13 wounded.

In execution of their Command's order to defend the life and property of the people and the Paris Agreement, the PLAF dealt telling blows at the cease-fire breakers.

Bien Hoa: On November 6, PLAF artillery pounded the city's airfield, destroying many fighter planes and a quantity of war materials. It was from Bien Hoa that Saigon aircraft took off to attack PRG-controlled areas.

Quang Duc: In the Bu Bong – Tuy Duc area, on November 2,4 and 5, the PLAF put out of action 650, from three infantry and armoured battalions, downing an aircraft and capturing 20 military vehicles. The area between Tuy Duc crossroad and Doan Van bridge on Route 14 was retaken by the liberation forces.

Thua Thien: On November 4, the PLAF foiled an encroaching operation southwest of Khe Thai by Battalion 1, Regiment 3 and Ranger Battalion 21. Throughout October, and more particularly in the last two weeks of the month, they repelled land-grabbers southwest of Khe Thai and Mo Tau, and northeast of Li Hi, inflicting 500 casualties, seizing or destroying 100 weapons, 7 motor-boats, 6 vehicles, and recapturing the Bach Ma region and 8 positions.

Central Trung Bo: In October, countering a Saigon inroad liberation forces knocked out 4,330 of their men (2 battalions and 25 platoons), destroyed 50 vehicles, 8 artillery pieces and 10 locomotives and carriages, grounding aircraft, capturing 450 weapons and levelling a dozen positions established illegally by Saigon troops in areas under PRG control.

Highlands: In just a month ending October 25, the PLAF hit hard at encroachers south of the provincial capital of Pleiku, at Chu Nghe, Chu Ret, Ngoc Bay and northwest of Kontum city. They wiped out 1,000 adverse troops, decimated two battalions, grounded 8 aircraft and destroyed 14 vehicles, 11 big guns and an ammunition dump.

Tay Ninh: From October 7 to 20, regional troops did short work of 130 land grabbers, wrecked 2 guns and seized 60 weapons of various kinds.

Thu Dau Mot: In the last twenty days of October, guerillas of Ben Cat and provincial districts knocked out of action 90 cease-fire breakers and 34 vehicles, including several tanks, and seized a quantity of weapons and military equipment.

My Tho: In October, the PLAF took a toll of 2,500 Saigon troops, badly mauled a battalion, and erased, or forced the adversary out of, 31 positions set up in violation of the Paris Accord in the PRG controlled zone.

Kien Phong: From October 15 to 28, regional troops and guerillas razed or recaptured 11 positions, wiped out 400 Saigon soldiers and talked 200 others into leaving the Saigon army.

Ben Tre: From October 16 to 26, countering rice-plundering and land-grabbing operations the PLAF killed or wounded 200 adverse troops and set afire two landing craft. On October 29, guerillas intercepted 2 security force battalions in Mo Cay district and inflicted 100 casualties.

Western Nam Bo: In the first 12 days of October, resisting adverse forces engaged in rice-looting and land-encroaching operations, regional troops and guerillas blotted out or forced to withdraw 8 garrisons and put 1,150 enemy out of combat. In an action against a car park supporting an adverse incursion into Rach Gia province, the PLAF blasted 21 vehicles out of commission and knocked out 20 soldiers. In Tra Vinh guerillas killed or wounded 130 Saigon men engaged in rice looting while regionals of Phung Hiep, Long My and O Mon districts, Can Tho province, wiped out 260. In mid-October guerillas of Thoi Binh and Ngoc Hien districts, Ca Mau province, harassed Division 21 to prevent it from plundering rice and illegally establishing garrisons in PRG-controlled zone. 140 adverse troops were knocked out and a number of garrisons compelled to withdraw.

Operation Phoenix and the failure of pacification in South Viet Nam

KNOWLEDGEABLE American officials recognized long ago that the Viet Nam war was a conventional military confrontation imposed upon an essentially political struggle between competing ideological systems, and that no purely military strategy could ever guarantee success on the battlefield. Thus in 1966, Michael C. Conley, an Army researcher on the staff of the Center for Research in Social Systems, warned: "Technology is no substitute for politics; the more the attention of the security forces is absorbed by technology, the closer that force is to political bankruptcy and possible military defeat."

By the end of 1972, it was apparent that America's awesome technology had failed to achieve victory in Viet Nam and that the US side there was approaching political bankruptcy at a rapid pace. Thwarted in his efforts to impose a client regime on the people of Viet Nam, President Nixon has initiated new efforts to overcome the political advantage of the National Front for Liberation (NLF). This political counter-offensive, known in Washington as "The Other War" or the pacification campaign, is little understood by the anti-war movement despite the fact that it will play a major role in US strategy for post-settlement hostilities. Even now, 200,000 political prisoners face death in Thieu's jails, while the Nixon administration prepares an indefinite extension of the "Operation Phoenix" camgaign to liquidate the leadership of the NFL. Only a thorough understanding and knowledge of the Government's pacification strategies will allow us to organize an effective campaign against Phoenix and related programs.

The Theory and Practice of Pacification

While American social scientists often stereotype Vietnamese peasants as docile, credulous bumpkins who try to avoid involvement with either side in the war, the survival of the Vietnamese Revolution in the face of almost unbelievable hardship and suffering is a testament to the determination and dedication of the rural masses.

The US Command, for its part, quickly discovered in Viet Nam that technology alone could not produce a decisive victory and that it would be necessary to establish some kind of program to diminish the political and organizational authority of the National Front for Liberation. The pacification apparatus created for this purpose emerged in May 1967 as CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development Support). CORDS is currently under direct military supervision, as represented by the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam (MACV), but is now being transferred to a new "civilian" authority, the State Department Directorate of Resettlement and Reconstruction.

The US pacification directorate does not suffer from a lack of theoretical perspective—most of those in the top layers of command have at least a partial understanding of revolutionary warfare. Thus in a 1971 statement to the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee, former CORDS director William E. Colby acknowledged that to undercut the political advantage of the NFL it is necessary to "form a new political base for the GVN [Saigon government] in the Vietnamese people and their local communities, replacing the traditional focus of authority in the palace, the military command, the French-trained bureaucrats." However, since the principal US objective in Viet Nam is to destroy the revolution and thus discourage the rise of revolutionary movements elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the American counter-revolutionary effort has required the maintenance of a regime committed to the prosecution of the war and the liquidation of insurgent elements in the population. And since the only possible constituency for such a government is "the palace, the military command, the French-trained bureaucrats," it is obvious that any American effort to form "a new political base for the GVN" was doomed from the very start.

The American counter-insurgency effort has suffered from another serious contradiction: the lack of a *bona fide* political philosophy with which to counter the arguments of the NFL. The program enunciated by Colby, calling for an end to "the rule of the landlord class," obviously would require a genuine social transformation. Since, however, we are committed by prior necessity to preserve the existing oligarchy in Saigon, the most we can promise in an effort to win support in the countryside is a modest program of technical assistance, which would, at best, provide limited benefit to the already privileged class of large landowners and petty bourgeoisie. The Vietnamese peasant, always skeptical and perceptive when his own interests are at stake, can see clearly that the American program of development will never abolish the existing system of wealth and power. Lacking any real promise for a better life, the American political counter-offensive was bound to fall on deaf ears. If we were to have any chance of winning in Viet Nam, CORDS administrator William E. Chambers suggested in 1972, the first thing that would have to be done is "to give the people a dream, something to fight for." But the only dream we have to offer is "in negative terms of anti-communism," and to the uncommitted, "a negative value isn't a very good sales pitch."

Unable to sponsor a social revolution in South Viet Nam or to compete effectively with the NFL in the political arena, the US Command continues to pursue the one course still available in the "Other War": destruction of the NFL political apparatus itself. Liquidation of the NFL's "shadow government" (in Pentagon parlance, the Vietcong infrastructure, or VCI) is the sole objective of Operation Phoenix. Many American strategists now believe that Phoenix is essential to the success of US plans for political warfare now that a cease-fire is in effect.

(To be continued)

MICHAEL T. KLARE

in the cities

o On Oct. 21, more than 500 workers, civil servants, war invalids and other people took to the streets and paraded in Hue to demand relief for the victims of flood and tax cuts. They assaulted rice depots and urged the administration to sell rice to the people. An alert was given by the local authorities and police reinforcement was sent to the Town Hall, Radio Station and other places of importance, while troops saw all their leaves cancelled.

o On the afternoon of Oct. 27, more than 500 civil servants sent by Thieu to a "re-education centre" at Vung Tau staged a hunger strike against the harsh "study" regime of the Administration. "If the Management of the centre persists in maintaining its rigorous discipline," one of strike leaders said, "all the civil servants at this re-education centre will take further protest action."

o A rally was recently held by 100 people and 20 priests at Phuoc Dinh Pagoda, Tay Ninh province, and a denunciation was sent by them to the Buddhist Association and various newspapers in Saigon of the Thieu administration's and Khiem Hanh district chief's unwarranted arrests of priests and flogging to death of a number of other people.

An unprovoked encirclement of the Pagoda and persecution of bonzes was ordered by the above-mentioned district chief on Oct. 19 and 20.

o Saigon war veterans, orphans and widows recently revealed that no benefits had been given them since the beginning of this year. Some of them did receive an allowance, but with sharp curtailment, and were badly treated by representatives of the Saigon administration. An end to this state of things and payment of fair compensations was urged.

In the Saigon-controlled areas

Exorbitant taxation...

SOUTH Vietnamese traders and consumers alike are overburdened with taxes. The wage-earners have to pay taxes on rice, use of roads, housing, schooling... Cab drivers are squeezed by imposition on their vehicles and for stationing space and each trip they make. Small traders pay taxes for their market stalls, licenses, signboards, market toll, shelters, roadside occupation. They are arbitrarily fined and have to grease the policemen's and soldiers' palms. A market stall has to pay various kinds of taxes amounting to 5,020 piastres in all. A small trader pays 10% of tax on his turn-over. TVA hits wholesale dealers for the income they derive from bank deposits and propriety. In the collection of taxes, the Saigon administration applies such policies as full tax collection, back collection and worst of all, seizure of property to be auctioned (such as the case of the Alfa film firm, the Tin Nghia bank). Tax collectors have to check payment of licence fees, taxes on land, roadside occupation, signboards. When certifying any paper, town district officials must ask the applicant to show documents testifying that he is not in arrears with taxes; if he is insolvent, appropriate measures will be taken against him. Thieu also raises "security," "assistance to soldiers," "self-defence" taxes. Each household has to pay 1,000 piastres of "security" tax, a wage-earner of the 10,000 piastres bracket 1,500 piastres to the "assistance to soldiers" funds.

In the countryside, heavy taxes are levied on land estates. Even the "economic council" of the Saigon administration has had to admit that this is a second TVA which impoverishes further the rural population. Taxes are also levied on cattle and poultry, pumps, motorcraft, at the rate of 200 piastres for a pump, 1,500 piastres for a pair of buffaloes, 20-30 piastres for a head of fowl sold in Saigon.

These taxes, typical of the Thieu regime, are to offset the deficit of the Saigon budget. Thieu hopes to earn in 1974 226.48 billion piastres from taxation, or an increase of 85% over 1973. This boosts all kinds of taxes; the special income tax hitting commercial and industrial enterprises rises from 9,6 billion to 16 billion, the income tax, from 70 million to 3.6 billion, the fuel tax from 3.7 to 41.6 billion, the TVA by 42%. With regard to licenses, their rate grows but the total proceeds drop. Commenting on this tax rise, *Dien Tin* wrote on November 3: "It will cause great perturbations in the market prices in 1974 because the volumes of many consumer goods remain the same while the taxes levied on them go up constantly." Regarding the fall of the income from licence fees the same paper remarked: "This is not a healthy sign as it heralds that business will be in the doldrums and many traders will have to close their shops, which will adversely affect the economic situation in the coming years."

NGOC BAO

Anti-war drive in the Saigon army

Against the war and marching orders

Orders for looting and encroachment operations against the PRG-controlled areas met with continued refusal by Saigon troops in August, September and October 1973. The movement spread from groups or platoons to companies and even battalions, not only within security guards and "people's self-defence" units, but also among regulars.

On August 28, many officers and men from several companies, Battalions 2 and 3, Infantry Regiment 3, did not comply with orders to encroach upon the Khe Thai liberated area in Thua Thien province. On August 15, all officers and men of security guard battalion named "Vanguard" similarly refused to attack, and establish posts in, the Go Tuat Canal area, Tan Hiep district, Rach Gia province. In the first week of August 1973, an anti-war rebellion was staged by the whole battalion 3, regiment 10, division 7, against an inroad into Tam Binh village, My Tho province. The firmness of the protesters forced their CO to withdraw the outfit to its original position. On August 12, security guard battalion 70, thrown into a raid on the liberated area of My Tho province, returned to its position prior to the cease-fire agreement at the suggestion of the locals. In Tra Vinh, men from security guard battalion 473 opposed on Sept. 1 a combat assignment and abstained from sacking fields and orchards in Tieu Can district, thereby compelling their command to withdraw their unit to a rear-base. On Sept. 3., all officers and men of a battalion belonging to division 7 firmly resisted orders to launch a foray into the liberated area of Kien Binh district, Kien Tuong province.

Desertions and disposal of bullies

The Saigon troops were in their heart of hearts scornful of their bullying CO's, their torturers. After hearing talks on the PRG policy of national reconciliation and concord, they rebelled and cut down their commanders, then went over to the people's side in full kit.

This movement spread vigorously in all provinces of Central Nam Bo. Thus the commanders of security guard battalion 432 in Ben Tre were wiped out by their mutinous men, while at Vinh Thanh village, Kien Tuong province, 10 other thugs were killed by soldiers of battalion 2, regiment 10, division 7. The desertion rate was high in many battalions and companies of security guard and even of the regular army in Central Nam Bo. Many units' strength was reduced by one-third or one-half, like security guard battalions 417 and 423 in Kien Tuong province, security guard battalions 418, 427, 402 in My Tho, security guard battalions I and 504 in Kien Tuong, security guard battalions 518 and 452 in Ben Tre. An average 500 troops deserted every month in Division 7. In two districts of My Tho 300 men left for home in the last 20 days of August 1973. In September 1973, in the provinces of Central Nam Bo, 2,500 officers and men of the Saigon army killed their commanders and rejoined their families. In the same month, at the Binh Duc training centre, My Tho province, 2 mass desertions involved 220 trainees.

In Can Tho province, in two nights of early September 1973, patriotic soldiers of two posts in Ke Sach district rose up, murdered 10 bullies, levelled the posts and crossed over to the revolutionary side bringing with them 20 guns. From Oct. 1 to 10, nearly 100 troops garrisoned in Vi Thanh township went over the hill. On October 3, all the 170 men of security guard battalion 407 in Can Tho turned down a sweep against the liberated zone and insisted on their demobilization. Prior to this, on the night of Sept. 22, 70 troops of the Vam Cai Tram post, Ke Sach district, Can Tho province, rose up, wounded 2 thugs notorious for their crimes against the people, then returned home.

In Tra Vinh province, in the first week of August 1973, 60 soldiers of battalion 404 garrisoned in the township, went AWOL and come back to families.

In Sa Dec province, on the night of August 7, Saigon men in An Phu Thuan rebelled, punished 31 cruel thugs, then brought 20 guns to the PLAF. On Sept. 24, troops of security guard battalion 495 mutinied, wiped out their CO at the Trung Hoa military subsector, then deserted, leaving other bravos in fright. In the ten days ending September 1973, in a village of Hoc Mon district, Gia Dinh province, 30 security guards quit the enemy ranks. On September 17, troops in An Son post, Duc Hoa district, Cholon province, resisted marching orders, killed with hand grenades 15 thugs, then went home.

In Southern Trung Bo provinces, in September 1973, officers and men of the Saigon army rose up by the hundreds, against their cruel officers and deserted. In Dalat, 100 men of 3 security guard battalions assigned to an operation against the liberated area of Binh Dinh province defected to a man. A "people's self-defence" company in Binh Thuan province also fragged their officers who forced them into an incursion.

On the night of September 25, many soldiers of the recon company belonging to Regiment 5 occupied a building in the district capital of Dong Cat (Mo Duc, Quang Ngai province), then denounced through megaphones the Nguyen Van Thieu clique for forcing Saigon troops to wreck the peace. Troops sent to retake the building were driven back with 8 killed or wounded.

Alarmed by that fast-spreading anti-war movement, the Nguyen Van Thieu clique of war-like reactionaries has used both cajolery and violence to deal with it. But the chances of success are slim.

in brief

+ In the ebullient "Viet Nam Week" held throughout Sweden from October 21 to 27, many meetings and demonstrations adopted resolutions condemning continued US involvement in Viet Nam and Indochina, and urging Saigon to end its shelling, bombing and encroaching attacks against the liberated areas of Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Closing the week, 4,000 demonstrators paraded in Stockholms downtown streets on October 27, carrying flags of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, and banners and slogans demanding that "the US and Saigon regime stop their violations of the Paris Agreement," "release the 200,000 political prisoners"...

+ In their appeal for scientific and technical co-operation with Viet Nam, 150 French professors and scientists called on all the French scientists and technicians to increase their support and assistance to their Vietnamese colleagues, by collecting money to buy books and scientific equipment for them, and taking part in researches on scientific and technical problems concerning Viet Nam.

+ The meeting of the National Executive of the Norwegian Solidarity with Viet Nam Committee has decided to take greater support actions and keep a "Viet Nam Week" from November 22 to 29.

+ On November 2, the Tanzanian Government donated 6,000,000 Tanzanian shillings to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam to help finance economic projects in her liberated areas.

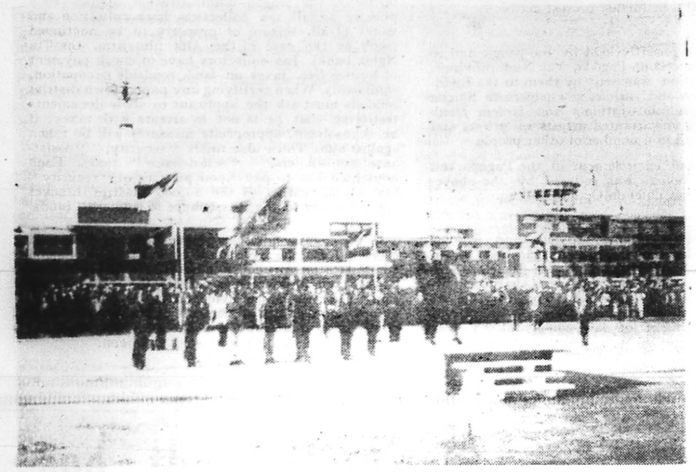
+ In a week of support for the Vietnamese people's struggle, representatives of many British peace organizations, including Labour MPs, handed a petition with 600 signatures to the Prime Minister's Office, demanding that the US and the Saigon administration free at once the political prisoners now being held in South Viet Nam's jails, and urging the British government to recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

+ The General Union of the Women of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen has recently sent a letter to its Viet Nam counterpart, exposing US-Thieu horrible prison regime and torture inflicted on South Vietnamese patriots and peace partisans, including many women and children.

+ The 3rd International Assembly of the Christians Uniting with the Indochinese Peoples held in Turin from November 1 to 4, discussed the political situation in the Indochinese countries, the theological significance of the Indochina war, the Third World and the experience of the Indochinese peoples, the reconstruction of Viet Nam, the Christians and the issue of South Vietnamese political prisoners.

The Assembly unanimously approved a denunciation of US-Thieu continued detention of 200,000 political prisoners in South Viet Nam.

Warm friendship in meridional Hemisphere



Solemn reception of the RSVN PRG delegation at Dar es Salaam Airport

THE special plane carrying the PRG delegation crossed the equator shortly after 2 p.m. and landed in Dar es Salaam 2 hours and 15 minutes later. An eastern African country, Tanzania is located between the Southern 10th and 15th parallels. As regards natural environment, it is very much like South Viet Nam. From the airport to the capital city, we rode past coconut, mango, breadfruit, sugar cane and banana gardens. We went through population centres with coconut leaf-covered houses. We saw blossoming flamboyants along the seashore, frangipanes with white, yellow and pink flowers in public squares, tall erythrins with red blossoms and kapok trees with unripe fruit hanging from branches and whose leaves had already begun to fall.

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's capital, stands on a gulf. The *port of peace* (as it means) was resplendent with Tanzanian and RSVN flags. A thick crowd, made up mostly of *Tanu* Party members, greeted us at the airport. "Welcome to Tanzania, Comrade Nguyen!" "Hail the Chairman!", "Hail Madame Binh!"

We read and heard the same greetings all along the way to the capital. At the airport they were mixed with the loud music of dance and song ensembles.

Colourful and cheering throngs gathered at townlets on the wayside and in the city's main streets. A very large one was in the Government House's yard, beating drums, big ones covered with zebra skins, and small ones accompanying the music. Dancers, toy bells on their feet, sang and shouted.

In Zanzibar, Tanzania's coconut island, the PRG was given a similar reception. Everywhere we went, whether at the airport or in factories, dancers performed in our honour. About 500 sq.km and with a population of 360,000, Zanzibar which had been a separate country was united with Tanganyika en 1962. Like Tanzania's mainland, it possesses a fertile soil and abundant agricultural resources. Looking at the landscape from a Caribou of the Tanzania Air Force, we had the impression of over flying South Vietnamese territory. A coconut canopy covers the island from end to end. Like aniseed and clove, coprah is one of the country's most valuable export lines.

Houses in the countryside are commonly roofed with coconut leaves, in front of each usually stands a stack of coconuts as high the roof. The area around is planted with cassava, breadfruit, banana or sugar cane. Cashewnut which supplies an important export trade (81,000 tons) a year can be seen in gardens or along highways. There are also hairy letchis and durians which match those grown in Eastern Nam Bo in quality. Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho was presented with some durians.

Zanzibar's streets as well as roads leading to sugar and tobacco factories and tanneries were packed with people. As a rule, men were dressed in white, women in black and girls in showy colours. Women's dresses consist of two large pieces of cloth, one serving as a skirt and covers the body up to the breast, the other as a blouse-cum kerchief. Female market-goers carry what they have bought or want to sell in rush or plastic baskets balanced on their heads. Of the several countries visited by the delegation, Zanzibar has the most police women. Equality between men and women has been proclaimed; they enjoy the same rights and the same salaries for the same job and are of the same professional standard.

People flocked out to welcome us from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the tropical sun of Africa. They all waved flags, flowers or leafy twigs. On the guests' passage they chanted slogans and, especially women, clucked their tongues as a sort of cheer.

TANZANIA has exerted sustained efforts in national reconstruction. In rural areas, along the line of the Tanu party "social" villages called *Ujamaa* have been built. Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho visited one of them in a Dar es Salaam vicinity. An *Ujamaa* is a kind of commune where the State supplies the peasants working collectively with, or help them get, machines and farm implements. Each one has its own primary and middle schools: the pupils wear uniforms and pay no school fees.

Our delegation also called at a peasant living quarters. There were plenty of conveniences. Large families are allotted more room than small ones. We also saw the relics of slavery in a Dar es Salaam suburb, which consist in huts with circular mud walls, cone-shaped roofs made of thatch or grass, and a rudimentary mortar right in the middle. They had been rebuilt in squares grown with mango trees. From those huts to fairly comfortable three- or four-storeyed *Ujamaa*, man had had to spend hundreds of centuries.

We paid a brief visit to the campus of the University of Dar es Salaam. All departments were located here. Fronting the road by which we came was the air-conditioned living quarters of professors and lecturers.

Rich in natural resources, Tanzania has a substantial yearly export tonnage of diamond (780,000 carats), cotton (56,000 tons), coffee (49,000 tons) etc. Tourists particularly appreciate her traditional sculptures. Working on mahogany or iron wood the artist can, with a tool looking like a small spade, carve ancient men of Africa or animals like lions, rhinoceros, giraffes, crocodiles or elephants.

ONE of the unforgettable events was the meeting of Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh with representatives of Africa's national liberation movements having their headquarters in Dar es Salaam. All were sitting on the verandah of the Guests' House. The yard was strewn with erythrin blossoms. A few pheasants strutted on the threshhold, looking at the audience, apparently very astonished by their number.

"A rare encounter!" said one representative as it ended.

"A valuable lesson!" commented another one.

By request, Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho talked about the combat experience of the South Vietnamese people and the factor accounting for their victory. He spoke sincerely but unassumingly and one could hear the busy scratching of pens on note-books. The meeting went on and on without anybody noticing it, and was only brought to a close by the protocol officer anxious to see to the guests' fullfilling their program. Thanking the leader of the NFL and the PRG, a representative said:

"Mr Chairman, the imperialists' dread of your Africa tour is fully justified. The fighting experience of the fraternal people of Viet Nam is a complementary source of strength for the anti-colonialist fronts in these African countries. We sincerely thank you for passing on to us the lessons that our Vietnamese brothers have learned at the cost of their blood."

It was already dark. The moon rising over the sea and the lights in front of the Guests' House illuminated the shadows of the representatives in national costumes who walked under rows of trees like guerillas setting out for an operation in the jungle.

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho's visit ended with a state reception which began at the same time as the radio broadcasting of the joint communiqué between the Republic of South Viet Nam and the United Republic of Tanzania, which highlighted the strengthening of solidarity and friendship between the two peoples. Present at the function were leaders of the Tanu Party, the government and National Assembly, ministers, deputies, representatives of various religions and nationalities. Diplomats said there had never been so large and lavish a reception, nor such a crowd of foreign envoys. It significantly crowned the unusually warm welcome extended by the Tanzanian people and government to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and his party in their visit to this country of the Southern Hemisphere.

HUYNH VAN LY

- *Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho delivering his speech at the Tanu Party Congress*
- *Tanzanian youths performing folk dances to greet the PRG delegation*

World Jurists denounce...

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers in a recent statement on the South Viet Nam situation vigorously condemned the US and the Saigon administration for their serious violations of the Paris Agreement.

The statement particularly denounced the recent savage bombing of Loc Ninh district town by Saigon planes and the land-grabbing operations against the areas administered by the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

It noted that meanwhile the US government continued to rush millions of tons of hardware to South Viet Nam and the Saigon administration stubbornly refuses to carry out many provisions of the Paris Agreement, especially the provisions relating to the return of the civilian prisoners detained in its prisons and those stipulating the exercise and guarantee of democratic liberties in all South Viet Nam.

"This deliberate intention to oppose the application of the Paris Agreement was again manifested on November 8 by Saigon representatives' refusal to resume the La Celle Saint Cloud Conference and their constant manoeuvres to prevent the work of various organs designed to put the Agreement into effect, notably the work of the Joint Military Commission," the statement added.

It went on: "The dangerous worsening of the situation is due first of all to the Thieu administration and also to Washington which continues to give it a massive support.

The IADL alerts all lawyers against the gravity of this situation."

It called on the governments of the countries signatory to the Act of the International Conference on Viet Nam to take necessary initiatives to have the Paris Agreement implemented, in particular to ensure effective respect for the ceasefire, strict implementation of the provisions on the return of the civilian personnel detained by Saigon, and the guarantee of democratic liberties for the entire South Vietnamese people.

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Hemp crop in North Viet Nam

The DRVN in brief

Berlin — Hanoi airline

An agreement on civil air service was reached on November 5, 1973 between the DRVN Government and the GDR Government for the German Interflug to a service which has just made the first test flight from Berlin to Hanoi.

Tay Hieu coffee

In the past 17 years, Tay Hieu state farm which grows over 1,000 hectares of coffee, has produced nearly 7,000 tons of coffee beans. The farm is now expanding its acreage.

6,000 tons of fish

Up to the end of last month, Quang Binh province has caught nearly 6,000 tons of fish, a gain of 1,200 tons over the corresponding period last year.

Tuyen Quang buffaloes

Tuyen Quang has one of the most important herds of buffaloes in the North. Not including new-born calves, the total number is about 65,000, of which over 20,000 are female. This herd increases from 6,000 to 7,000 head every year.

The province is now building a breeding farm of 1,000 buffaloes and is contemplating to raise its herd to hundreds of thousands.

Untapped energy

North Viet Nam is watered by one thousand rivers totalling about 26,000 kilometres in length and 120 billion kw/h in capacity, 58 billion of which are easy of exploitation. The great number of sunny days (200 in a year with a temperature from 35 to 45°C outdoors) and the southeast and northeast monsoons blowing in the seacoasts, delta and midland of the North, are a great source of energy needed for the operation of machines.

Suoi Hai pineapples

The Suoi Hai state farm recently set up has 20 hectares under hill pineapple which yielded a first crop of 24 tons of fruit. For 1974, the farm has cleared over 100 more hectares of virgin land.

A late-season crop has been experimented which is to be harvested in Winter-Spring. Besides the juicy Victoria species, the farm grows hundreds of thousands of Na Hoa pineapple shrubs which produce 1.5 times more fruit and a cayenne thornless variety bearing fruits weighing 4.5 kilograms each.

Cocoon and hilly mulberry

The Ba Vi silk farm has raised the acreage under mulberry to thousands of hectares and harvested hundreds of tons of cocoon in each crop. It has successully experimented large scale cultivation of many varieties of high yield mulberry thriving on hilly soil.

Sea products for export

The Hai Phong fish canning factory has processed many valuable kinds of aquatic products for export such as frozen shrimps, sea fish, sea crabs and cuttle fish which can keep for one year.

A powerful assault

ON learning that our tanks had made their appearance, an effort was made by the enemy artillery and air force to stop our advance with bombs and shells. Company 7 reacted with a sudden turn towards the district capital of Dak To-Tan Canh. The N° 377 commanded by platoon leader Nguyen Nhan Trien was the first to move on the main road flooded with electric light. This sent all the enemy "people's militia" and "self-defence" units into a flurry.

Our artillery started barking. Orders were given by the company commander to the tanks to rush through the open gate. The power station was hit by bullets and darkness fell all of a sudden.

As the 377th vehicle reached a two-storey house two flashes were seen ahead of it. "That's their fire. They want to stop us" reported Trien to his company commander. "Clear the way ahead with the big guns!" came the answer.

Hardly had a fork of lightning flown out of one blockhouse when gunner Vu Dac Luong let off a bullet on it. The detonation drowned the enemy fire coming from Dak To 1, Dak To 2 and Tan Canh. The other blockhouses were also silenced and our infantrymen dashed forward, removed with hand grenades the barbed wire entanglements of "strategic hamlets," then took the inmates into safety. By that time, our tanks had gone, nearer the enemy CP and artillery position.

ARRIVED at the defence perimeter around the enemy CP, our platoons dispersed in various directions, and in the very first minutes, broke open all the entrance gates. Adverse gunships and AD6's flying very low in strafing actions were immediately fired at by machineguns mounted on our armoured vehicles. Panick stricken, they poured bombs and shells on their own troops. Platoon chief Nguyen Nhan Trien roared forward in his N° 377. In the dim light he spotted a high watertank at the centre of the enemy post, from which a DK ordnance piece and several machineguns were pin-pointing targets for their artillery. From the gun of N° 377 a straight line of fire was drawn : the DK was put out of action but the machineguns continued spitting their bullets downwards. N° 352 came to the rescue of N° 377 : another shell hit the water-tank, the machineguns and their gunners were thrown off on the ground. As N° 377 passed the gate, it again met with the resistance of three new fire positions which were the blockhouses assigned to halt our tanks' advance into the centre of the CP. They were quickly blotted out by the coordinated action of N°s 377 and 352 with the efficient assistance of N° 369. Commanders Trien and Luong guided their vehicles inside the fence accompanied by infantry troops who lost no time in attacking the enemy dwellings, tents and underground fortifications. B.40 and hand grenades exploded without let-up. The enemy commanders, in a supreme effort, dispatch a number of M 41 tanks to block the entrance gates, but they were quickly held up by N°s 377 and 352 in two diverging directions. One M.41 was knocked out of commission.

An order was given by commander Pham Cao Luong, and a second M.41 was reduced to inaction by a shell fired from its left side.

Our infantry men, under their own CO, followed N° 352 and penetrated into the CP centre through a large open gate.

NO 377 now turned left to engage the remaining group of M.41s. After reporting to his company commander, Trien changed his vehicle's position then continued to advance. He saw a M.41 moving forward, firing at random. He waited till it came very near, then ordered gunner Vu Dac Luong to open fire. A bullet struck the adverse armour right in its side. It immediately took fire while two others behind hastily retreated.

"Speed up right!" N° 377 sprang forward, leading the infantrymen in an attack against the enemy CP centre. In their progress, our tanks kindled a long row of fires.

By listening to the detonations, company commander Bui Dinh Dot could guess that our tanks and infantry were now entering the very sanctuary of the enemy in Dak To-Tan Canh — the dwelling houses of the US advisers, the seat of the enemy command and the signal centre.

By skilfully working his telecommunication network, he could follow the action of each column, each vehicle and muster forces for the wiping out of important adverse positions. At the height of the battle, a report by platoon chief Nguyen Nhan Trien reached him. "Enemy reinforcement tanks are coming from Dak To 2. Let N° 377 deal with them!" Meanwhile a strong barrage of fire was erected by the adverse artillery from inside Tan Canh to greet the Dak To 2 tanks. Nguyen Nhan Trien's proposal was accepted by company commander Dot. Once again the N° 377 tankists had an opportunity to display their skill and initiative. Although the enemy tanks were twice as many as ours our N° 377 and others fearlessly confronted them, setting afire 3 M.41s and immobilized the others, thereby making it possible for our infantry to rush forward and captured dozens of other M.41s.

While platoon leader Nguyen Nhan Trien's N° 377 was busy stopping the enemy tanks, Company Commander Dot also led his own column accompanied by infantry in an attack on Tan Canh. The enemy artillery position formed by a mixed group of 106mm and 155mm guns was soon silenced. The officers of the US-Saigon command and all kinds of troops : paratroops, infantry, armour, artillery, rangers, "self-defence"... came out in succession to surrender.

While the enemy was still in a great confusion, Bui Dinh Dot again led his tanks and the accompanying infantrymen against Dak To 2. This daring thrust quickly wiped out all the enemy remaining troops. The situation fell under our absolute control.

After 6 hours of fierce fighting, liberation flag now fluttered over Dak To 1, Dak To 2 and Tan Canh. People of various nationalities, by the thousands, now freed from US-Saigon yoke, jubilantly acclaimed our tankists whom they saw for the first time in their life, coming to liberate their native land.

T.K.

DRVN – PRA

A precious contribution to the strengthening of friendly relations

AT the invitation of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania and the Government of the People's Republic of Albania, a delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam headed by Pham Van Dong, Political Bureau member of the VNWP Central Committee and Premier of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, paid an official friendship visit to the People's Republic of Albania from October 28 to November 2, 1973.

During its stay in Albania, the DRVN Party and Government delegation visited a number of industrial, agricultural and cultural establishments in Tirana and in Durres province where it could witness the high revolutionary spirit of the Albanian people and the achievements they had recorded in socialist construction.

Enver Hoxha, First Secretary of the Labour Party of Albania Central Committee, cordially received and talked with Pham Van Dong and Nguyen Duy Trinh.

Talks were conducted by the DRVN Party and Government delegation headed by Pham Van Dong, and the PRA Party and Government delegation headed by Mehmet Shehu, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Labour Party of Albania, and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania, on the further strengthening of the fraternal relations of co-operation between the Vietnamese and Albanian peoples and between the two countries and the two parties. The two sides informed each other of the situation in their respective countries, their achievements and experiences in socialist construction, and other problems of mutual concern.

The talks took place in an atmosphere of cordiality, friendship, and mutual understanding.

The Albanian side re-affirmed its complete solidarity with and strong support to the fraternal Vietnamese people's struggle against the US imperialists and their henchmen, and its backing to the Vietnamese people in their tireless efforts to preserve and consolidate their successes and build socialism in the DRVN. The Albanian people and the PRA Government, in the future, whether in victory or in difficulty, will continuously give a strong support to the just struggle of the Vietnamese people and the DRVN.

The Vietnamese side informed the Albanian side of the efforts of the DRVN Government and the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government to implement the Paris Agreement scrupulously in the past nine months, and also of the systematic violations of the vital provisions of the Agreement by the US and the Saigon administration.

The two sides severely condemned the US for its arrogant encroachment on the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam by continuing its military involvement and its intervention in South Viet Nam's internal affairs, and by instigating the Saigon administration's war acts and provocations against the liberated areas under the RSVN PRG control. They held the US heavily responsible for these acts. The two sides viewed these acts as an obstacle to the restoration of peace and the stabilization of the situation in Viet Nam, and as the cause of the tension in Viet Nam and the whole of Indochina. They demanded that the US and its henchmen, the Saigon administration, put an immediate end to these acts.

The Albanian side voiced its welcome and support to the correct and steady stand of the DRVN Government and the RSVN PRG to scrupulously implement the Paris Agreement while resolutely resisting the aggressive efforts of the US and the Saigon administration to prevent the Vietnamese people from materializing their sacred aspirations.

The Albanian side warmly hailed the successes which the brother people of Viet Nam, under the leadership of the VNWP and acting upon the desire of the beloved and respected President Ho Chi Minh, have recorded in socialist construction, under very difficult circumstances; and sincerely wished the people of Viet Nam many more and yet greater ones.

The Albanian side warmly hailed the resounding victories which the South Vietnamese people, under the leadership of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the RSVN PRG, their only genuine representative – have obtained in their struggle for liberation and in the consolidation of the liberated zone, and sincerely wished them many more and still greater ones in the building of a free, independent and democratic South Viet Nam and in their advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country. The Albanian side noted with joy that the prestige of the SVN NFL and the RSVN PRG, has ceaselessly heightened in Viet Nam and in the world, and reaffirmed its determination to continue strengthening its militant solidarity with the SVN NFL and the RSVN PRG.

The Vietnamese side warmly hailed the successes the Albanian people, under the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania headed by Enver Hoxha, and by taking a hoe in one hand and a gun in the other and mainly relying on themselves, have recorded in socialist construction and in the defence of their homeland. The Vietnamese side supported the efforts of the People's Republic of Albania to make active contributions to the struggle of all nations for freedom, independence, and social progress.

The two sides analyzed the development of the relations between the two parties, and the two countries, and noted with satisfaction that their fraternal friendship and militant solidarity had unceasingly developed in the common struggle to build socialism. The two sides were of the firm belief that their revolutionary friendship and unshakeable solidarity would develop and strengthen continuously.

Out of her internationalist obligation, the People's Republic of Albania is continuing her economic aid to the people of Viet Nam to overcome the consequences of the war and to build socialism in the DRVN. The two sides concluded various agreements on Albania's economic aid to the DRVN and on goods exchange and payments between the two countries in 1974.

The two sides highly evaluated the official friendship visit paid to the People's Republic of Albania by the delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the DRVN Government led by Pham Van Dong, Politburo member of the VNWP Central Committee and Premier of the DRVN Government considering it as a new, precious contribution to the strengthening of the friendly relations, the fraternal cooperation, and the internationalist solidarity between the Vietnamese and Albanian peoples, between the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Party of Labour of Albania, and between the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the People's Republic of Albania.

Cambodia

American gunship downed by the Cambodian patriotic forces

World Congress of Peace Forces

All for the Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian peoples

THE World Congress of Peace Forces was held at the Conference Hall in Moscow from October 25 to 31 with 3,200 delegates from 144 countries, 1,100 national organisations and 120 international organisations including the delegation of the South Vietnamese Peace Forces headed by Dr Trinh Dinh Thao, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces.

The Assembly was divided into 14 sub-committees. At the Indochina sub-committee, over 70 delegates from the peace forces of all countries and regions of the world discussed the Indochina situation and unanimously passed documents on Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

The Viet Nam document called on all governments and peace- and justice-loving people in the world to continue supporting the just struggle of the Vietnamese people, to launch a broad movement for the recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the sole authentic representative of the South Viet Nam people, to demand that the US and the Saigon administration strictly observe the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, that the United States immediately stop its increasing military aid to Nguyen Van Thieu, and completely withdraw the American military personnel and spies from South Viet Nam, and that the Saigon administration put an end to all terror against the democratic and peace forces, cease its illegal inroads into the liberated areas...

The gathering issued an appeal to all the peoples of the world to eliminate war from human society and get rid of racism and old and new colonialism in all their manifestations, ensure for every people the full freedom to choose their own path, and to put the big realizations of science and technique at the service of social progress.

It also approved a communiqué "For international security and disarmament, for national independence, co-operation and peace." Regarding Indochina, the communiqué said:

The Paris Agreement and the Agreement and Protocol on Laos represented very big successes of the patriotic forces of Viet Nam and Laos and inflicted on American imperialism important setbacks, thus contributing to the fair settlement of the issue of this part of the world.

But the common enemy of these peoles has not given up his designs and the war is still raging in Cambodia. The Saigon administration and the reactionary forces in Laos aided by the United States have been trying to impede the implementation of the accords signed. It is the duty of the public to urge the scrupulous respect by all parties of the Paris and Vientiane accords, and at the same time an end to the armed operations against the areas under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the release of the political prisoners detained by the Saigon authority.

Due to the grave situation, public opinion has also the responsibility of demanding that the US and its satellites end at once their aggression and interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia, in conformity with the objectives and principles of the political program of the National United Front of Kampuchea and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.

Everything must be done to support the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia who, in different positions, have been fighting for independence and peace.

petrol
an effective Arab weapon

THE project presented by the US President in a televised address on November 7 to deal with the energy crisis has not at all allayed the Americans' concern. The man usually prodigal of optimistic promises has had to admit that the US is heading for the gravest energy crises since the end of World War II. If late in last October, Nixon still warned that his West European allies would experience a bleak winter owing to the Arab oil boycott, now he has had to announce a 15 per cent cutback in heating oil supply for homes, offices and business enterprises. He has also said that the US might be short of 10 to 17 per cent of oil products and, at present of over 2 million barrels of petrol a day, and some 3 million barrels if the Arabs' action continues. He has advanced several emergency measures to cope with the crisis.

These and those of West European countries and Japan were taken after the Nov. 5 decision of ten Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuweit, Irak, Syria, Abu Daby, Qata, Barhein, Egypt, Lybia and Algeria) to immediately reduce their oil production by 25 per cent as compared with the September level and to have another 5 per cent cut in December. Once again this demonstrates that *petrol is an effective weapon in the hands of the Arabs engaged in a just struggle against the US-backed Israeli expansionists.*

The US ruling circles have tried vainly to minimize the importance of the oil weapon, to make believe that the US depends on Mid-East oil to a much lesser extent than other developed countries, that it has reliable "friends" in the Arab world, that it can find other energy sources, and so on and so forth. Nixon's Nov. 7 program has given the lie to such an oversimplification.

According to US official figures the Nixon administration reckons that by 1980 the US can import only 5 million barrels a day to meet its 18.5 million daily need. However such an estimate is still very conservative. In fact, in a special decision early this year the American President lifted control for some time (from Jan. 1 to April 30, 1973) over the import of Diesel oil. By the same decision the import limit of oil and products has been extended. G. Lincoln, head of the emergency appropriations office, said that that decision was prompted by the US inability to satisfy its needs in oil and related products in the coming winter. As a matter of fact, fuel shortage was at the bottom of the difficulties of American industry last December. As from 1973 the US has had to import 6 million barrels a day, which has led to new predictions, namely that the US should import, from Mid-East countries alone, 8 to 11 million barrels a day in 1980. To extricate itself from a dangerous dependence from Arab exporters, it has been looking for new energy sources within and without its borders apart from the Middle-East. A few years ago, not a few in the US ruling circles pinned high hopes on Alaska's crude oil, yet the laying of pipelines was disapproved by the Congress on air-pollution grounds (the oil prospection on the East coasts bill has undergone the same fate). Even if the project materialized, the US could at most maintain its 1972 out-put in 1980. The exploitation of new oil sources in the Northern regions of the US would require 8 to 10 years and 5 to 7 billion dollars' investments to produce one million barrels a day. In other words, *the exploitation of oil within US territory calls for huge investments and a long period of time, whereas consumption of oil keeps increasing ceaselessly.*

In recent times the US was dependent on foreign oil for only 23 per cent of its total consumption, mainly imported from Canada and Venezuela. It is now largely deprived of these sources of supply for these countries have their own reasons to restrict export to the US. Therefore *the US has grown more and more dependent on Arab oil, and at present as in a forseeable future, there is no escape from it.* According to *The New York Times* (July 8, 1973) this has been, and will be, worsening at an alarming rate:

In 1970 — less than 3% of home needs
In 1972 — 15% —
In 1980 — 35% —

This state of things cannot but affect US policy toward oil rich Arab countries. In this respect, it is relevant to quote James E. Akins, a State Department oil expert, recently appointed ambassador to the Kingdom of Iran: "Even King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who has said repeatedly that he wishes to be a friend of the United States and who believes that communism is a mortaly danger to Arabs, insists to every visitor that US policy in the Middle East, which he characterizes as pro-Israel, will ultimately drive all Arabs into the Communist camp, and that this will bring disaster on all America's remaining Arab friends..." (*Foreign Affairs*, April 1973).

For that reason, wrote *The New York Times* (April 1, 1973) Kissinger has begun re-examining the American policy toward the Middle East, and giving a serious thought to the incompatibility between unqualified military and political support to Israel and *the necessity of settling the relations with oil-producing countries, most of them Arab hostile to Israel, for the US should reconsider its relations not only with the oil producing countries but the pipeline-controlling ones as well.*

Whatever the results of Kissinger's reappraisal, it is obvious that the Arab countries have an important trump card to force Washington to pay more regard to their viewpoint in any solution to the Middle East problem. Recent events have shown that whatever the relations of each of them with the US, all Arab oil-producing countries are determined to make an effective use of their "black gold."

This is effective not only because of the mounting price the US has to pay for US support to Israel, but also because of its ability to prevent the Arabs' opponent to set up a counter-revolutionary alliance against them. A positive proof of this has been the tepidness of most, and the main, West European countries, and Japan toward the US undertaking in the Mid-East war. We do not want to oversimplify the problem by regarding all the calculations behind their behaviour as inspired by oil considerations but, very obviously, their needs in oil — vital for developed industry — have been very instrumental in shaping it. Every one is aware the differences, arising from fuel shortage, between the Americans and their allies have become sharper and sharper in the Middle East. They have frustrated the US plan to create a front of oil consumers against the so-called "offensive" of the oil-producers. To such an extent that they have surfaced in some of its closest allies as Britain, West Germany and Japan. While more than ever Washington needs their backing on the Mid-East problem, the *London Times* (Oct. 19, 1973) made it clear that the vital interest of the British lies in the satisfaction of their needs in oil, two-thirds of which (i.e one third of the fuel used) comes from Arab countries. Britain is thus compelled to have good relations with the Arabs. For France's *Le Monde* (Oct. 29) the Near East is Europe's doorway and Europe's interest in this region is unlike America's. To the US, Arab oil is important but to Europe it is vital.

In other words, if the US, on account of its own position, can afford to make light of the Arabs' feeling, West Europe and Japan definitely cannot. According to a recent study of the EEC, oil will still account for two-thirds of the energy used by the community's member countries, and for this reason they will have to import 85 to 95 per cent of their requirements from outside West Europe, of which 60 to 80 per cent from the Near East and North Africa (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 1973). According to recent statistics, here are West European countries' rates of oil dependence on this part of the world (*AFP*, Oct. 28, 1973):

Importing countries	Midle-East	Lybia	Algeria
West Germany	35%	41%	8%
Belgium	66%	20%	5%
France	45%	17%	25%
Italy	56%	31%	2%
Britain	61%	23%	1%

Geographically, culturally and economically, West European nations have closer ties with the Arab world than the US and it is not in their interest to toe the US line and give unreserved support to the Israeli aggressors. On Nov. 11 the governments of the nine EEC countries and Japan raised their voices to urge Israel to withdraw from Arab territories still under its occupation and blamed its stubborn position for their current fuel troubles.

Now that the US is acting as a "mediator" between Israel and the Arab countries, it and its accomplices seek to win over allies and divide oil-producing countries with the hope of neutralizing the oil weapon. Nigeria's Minister of Mines disclosed on Nov. 6 that Western petrol companies brought pressure to bear on his country to increase its oil production, which it categorically refused. Such a step, he said, would be a betrayal, contrary to the objective of the oil-producing countries' organization. While Iran keeps pooh-poohing petrol as a weapon against the enemies of the Arabs, on Nov. 8 the spokesman of the Indonesian petrol company boasted that his country could alleviate the oil crisis by stepping up its home production. According to various sources, however, these counter-measures have proved fruitless.

There is every indication that the Arabs will not stop screwing up, now that their weapon has shown its impact.

VAN DUC

Nixon : *Peace for the Middle East !*